The UK needs a new “national” urban speed limit of 20mph

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http://www.20splenty.org/uk_national_urban_speed_limit

20’s Plenty for Us

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Far from having a “national” urban speed limit of 30mph, this has been rejected by local authorities for a quarter of the UK population. All but two Inner London Boroughs and over half of the UK’s largest urban authorities now have a 20mph limit for most roads. Rather than just “recommending” 20mph limits the government should set a national 20mph limit and permit local authorities to justify any higher limits.

Imagine if the government set a standard for child health which was opposed by the Association of Directors of Public Health and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. In fact, these organisations say that the UK’s 30mph urban limit is no longer fit for purpose and advocate 20mph instead.

Imagine if the World Health Organisation said that “A safe speed on roads with possible conflicts between cars and pedestrians, cyclists or other vulnerable road users is 30km/h (20mph approx.)” and the UK government continued to insist that the national limit remain 50% higher because of a figure “pulled from the air” in 1934.

Well you don’t need to imagine because both of these are true.

• We believe that the government knows that 20mph is the right limit for the majority of residential and city centre streets or where pedestrians and cyclists mix with motor vehicles.

• We believe MPs know that 20mph limits are supported by over 70% of the population as the government reports this in its own British Social Attitudes Survey.

• We understand that the government is facing criticism from many local authorities because it is asking them to take all the responsibility and costs of setting the appropriate 20mph limits whilst the government washes its hands of national marketing and police enforcement standards that would come from setting a 20mph national urban default.

• The government is failing to provide a safe system or duty of care as there are over 100,000 casualties per year on 30mph roads. Pedestrians account for 25% of road deaths, one of the highest in Europe.

• A national 20mph limit is cost effective. It reduces casualties, improves air quality and raises exercise levels. Our calculations for Scotland show that it dominates in health economic terms as both better for health and cheaper than the do nothing or local authority by authority alternatives. http://www.20splenty.org/20_scotland_options

Rod King MBE, Founder and Campaign Director for 20’s Plenty for Us commented:

“By not making the change from a discredited 80 year-old 30mph limit that is neither national nor best practice, the government is failing in its duty to protect vulnerable road users - especially the young, elderly and disabled. It’s time to end the postcode lottery of speeds on some residential and community streets 50% higher than the 20mph set by responsible councils who have opted to reject the unsafe 30mph. It’s time to say that 20 is plenty wherever motor vehicles mix with people on the public places between buildings that we call streets. It’s time for the government to set a national 20mph limit for urban roads and allow local authorities to decide its exceptions.”

20’s Plenty For Us campaigns for a 20mph default speed limit in built up areas without physical calming.

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